4 Transgendering *shōjo shōsetsu*

Girls' inter-text/sex-uality

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Introduction

It is only relatively recently that female adolescence has begun to attract scholarly attention in the West. Dalsimer, for instance, notes the traditional neglect of female adolescence (as opposed to early childhood or womanhood) and points out that "theoretical formulations in the past have tended either to assimilate the experience of the girl to that of the boy, or alternatively, to cast its difference in terms that are stark and grim" (1986: 1). Similar remarks can be found in the introductory pages of a study on North American girls' series books:

> Girls' series books have been quadruple outcasts from critical circles because they are written for young readers, are targeted at girls, are popular reading, and, even worse, are series books, which often have been regarded with disdain by literary critics.
>
> (Inness 1997: 1)

The first three elements neatly overlap with those identified in Japanese *shōjo* (girls, young women) culture. Despite (or because of) their immense popularity, the all-women musical theatre Takarazuka,[1] *shōjo shōsetsu* (girls' fiction, fiction targeted at girl readers), and *shōjo manga* (girls' comics) were all "regarded with disdain" for decades by critics. As for the status of series books, however, one should note that there is no such negative connotation attached to this form of publication in Japan. This difference is a reminder that what is true in one culture may not necessarily be true in another.

Shōjo is, according to Orbaugh's concise exposition (2002: 458–459), a "cultural construct," which began to be circulated from about 1920 to recognize "a period in life when a female was neither naïve child nor sexually active woman," and which in contemporary society symbolizes "a state of being that is socially unanchored, free of responsibility and self-absorbed – the opposite of the ideal Japanese adult," and hence can be used "as a tool for the critique of contemporary society." Just as *shōjo*, a Japanese cultural construct, is not the same as the English category "girl," *shōsetsu* and *manga* are both quite different from "fiction" and "comics," which is precisely why I prefer using original Japanese terms in this chapter.

Thanks to a series of recent studies (e.g. Robertson 1998; McLelland 2000),

Japanese *shōjo* culture and some of its favorite themes such as *bishōnen* (beautiful boys), androgyny, transgender, transsexuality and male homosexuality have gained some recognition within Japanese cultural studies. Outside this discipline, however, they seem to be still more or less unknown. Germaine Greer's recent study of the depiction of male youth in art, *The Boy*, for instance, makes no reference to any Japanese example (*shōjo* culture or otherwise). Her advocacy of "women's reclamation of their capacity for and right to visual pleasure" (Greer 2003: 11) would be completely unnecessary in Japan, where men and women, and particularly *shōjo*, did and still do admire the beauty of androgynous boys and girls in the visual, performing and literary arts.

Closely connected with the peripheral position of key elements of Japanese culture in the West is the general tendency to rely on the highly selective material available in English (and other European languages) when representing Japanese culture. Discussions of the *shōjo* in Japanese literature thus tend to focus on well-circulated texts such as those by Yoshimoto Banana. This is true not only of primary texts but also of critical and theoretical works. Important and original studies of *shōjo* culture such as those by Takahara (1999), Kawasaki (1990) and Honda (1982, 1986) have hardly been mentioned outside Japan.

This chapter seeks to fill this cultural gap by providing a close reading of Kanai Mieko's novel entitled *Indian Summer* (1988).[2] The novel is not specifically targeted at the *shōjo* audience but it is deeply (and entertainingly) concerned with the *shōjo shōsetsu*, as the following passage from Kanai's Afterword indicates:

> As someone who grew up reading *shōjo shōsetsu*, it has been my wish for many years to write at least one *shōjo shōsetsu* myself, as a kind of *okaeshi* (return/revenge). I would hesitate to call this particular novel a *shōjo shōsetsu*, for it lacks some essential elements of the genre; nevertheless I might be allowed to say that the *shōjo* narrator of this novel, who does share some of my blood, lives, in a way quite bravely, representing certain feelings of *shōjo* of a certain period.
>
> (1999: 204)

What is shōjo shōsetsu?

The definition of the *shōjo shōsetsu* is not simple. In addition to *shōjo* being a complex cultural construct, the term *shōsetsu*, too, is notoriously difficult to define; it is not confined to novels and short stories but includes a much wider range of prose fiction which may also contain some dramatic and/or poetic elements, and may at times seem rather like an essay, a diary, or a documentary, etc.[3] For the time being, however, let us tentatively consider the *shōjo shōsetsu* in its broadest sense, that is, as prose fiction targeted (usually) at the *shōjo* reader, and (usually) with a *shōjo* protagonist. It includes a few different types such as:

1 stories for and about adolescent girls published in prewar girls' magazines, as represented by Yoshiya Nobuko's (1896–1973) *Hana monogatari* (Flower tales, 1916–24);

2 translated "classics" such as *A Little Princess* and *Anne of Green Gables*;
3 juvenile (or "junior") fiction of the 1960s and early 1970s written mostly by middle-aged men;
4 later juvenile fiction (or Cobalt *shōsetsu*, named after the series published by Shūeisha) written by young women writers such as Himuro Saeko, Arai Motoko, and Yuikawa Kei.

Depending on these subcategories and the associated periods, "essential elements" vary. Given that Kanai (b. 1947) belongs to the generation that is most familiar with the second type of the *shōjo shōsetsu*, it seems worth noting the following common elements of this genre, as observed by Hico Tanaka[4] (in Saitō 2002: 18–24):

1 that the protagonist is an orphan;
2 that she has an eccentric and/or obstinate guardian;
3 that the protagonist has a vivid imagination;
4 that her losing some of her imagination is compensated for by something else, such as marriage;
5 that masculinity is checked and modified by physical and mental/emotional illnesses and weaknesses;
6 that romantic heterosexual love is treated ultimately as the most important value.

In Kanai's novel some of these elements are retained with modification but others are dramatically changed. Neither the first-person narrator-protagonist, Momoko, nor her friend, Hanako, is an orphan, although each girl's parents are divorced or separated. At the beginning of the novel Momoko, who has just entered university, leaves her mother's house and moves into her aunt's flat in Tokyo. This aunt may be regarded as a modern version of the girl protagonist's guardian, and may seem slightly eccentric, but she is by no means obstinate. She is single and does not reflect the stereotypical image of a middle-aged woman in Japan. Most importantly, she is, like Kanai herself, an established writer of fiction and essays. Both Momoko and Hanako are avid readers (and cinema fans), but rather than dream about the stories they have read, they tend to criticize them. So the loss of imagination is not an issue in this novel, although the significance of reading/viewing is a key issue that will be discussed in detail below. Of the six elements, the fifth (checked/modified masculinity) seems to be the only one that is maintained, and it is not merely maintained but actually expanded into an acute and articulate criticism of gender in this novel. Heterosexual love or sexuality, on the other hand, is questioned and repeatedly denied.

The above common elements refer to one particular type of *shōjo shōsetsu*, that is, translated girls' fiction. As we shall see, Kanai's novel alludes to some other types, especially *Hana monogatari*. In other words, *Indian Summer* presents a parody of *shōjo shōsetsu* and a critique of gender constructions in contemporary Japanese culture and society. What I wish to show in the following is how the two

issues, intertextuality and gender criticism, are inseparably connected in this novel. Needless to say, our prime interest is not in *shōjo* culture as such but in the power and possibility of the *shōjo* to function as "a tool for the critique of contemporary society," to repeat Orbaugh's words (2002), or what Takahara (1999) terms her "arrogance" and "freedom."

What is *shōjo*?

Before discussing transgender and intertextuality, however, let us look at the construct of *shōjo* in a little more detail. The term *shōjo* seems to have been used widely from the third decade of the Meiji period onwards, that is, since around 1900. As Kume (1997: 195) notes, the distinction between *shōjo* and *shōnen* (boys, male youths, underage) in Meiji signified "difference in power," whereas the older and official term *joshi* (girl, woman, womankind) and its male equivalent *danshi* merely indicated difference in sex. *Shōjo* is also different from another earlier and clearly gendered term *musume*, which tends to connote daughterly duties and obligations within the *ie* (patriarchal family) and within the community and the nation as an extension of the family. The notion of the *musume* who leaves the confines of home and has some sort of cross-cultural experience is represented by Madame Butterfly – exotic, powerless, and conveniently virtuous.

That women assigned to perform female roles in the Takarazuka are called *musume-yaku* rather than *onna-yaku* (female roles), even though their counterparts are called *otoko-yaku* (male roles), certainly shows the asymmetrical nature of gender, and seems to indicate, as Robertson suggests, the intentions of the theater's founder, Kobayashi Ichizō:

> More important, he relegated the players of women's roles to the status of daughter, with its attendant connotations of filial piety, youthfulness, pedigree, virginity, and being unmarried. These were precisely the characteristics that Kobayashi sought in the young recruits and that marked the makings of a Good Wife, Wise Mother.
>
> (1998: 16)

Perhaps we should also mention here that there are at least three other relevant and widely used terms. *Onna no ko* (lit. female child) is interchangeable in many situations with *shōjo*, but being already a phrase consisting of three native Japanese words, *onna no ko* is not generally used for making further compound nouns and phrases (as is the Chinese-character term *shōjo*). *Onna no ko* may also sound slightly younger or more childish and less poetic in some cases than *shōjo*. In contrast, *otome* (virgin, maiden, girl) has a narrower range of meaning and usage.[5] Because of its pure, innocent image, it was often used by Yoshiya Nobuko as the reading of the Chinese characters for *shōjo*. Finally, *ojōsan* and the more formal/high-class *ojōsama*, are honorific versions of *musume* and hence used for someone else's daughter and young ladies of high status.

There is another important point to make about the term *shōjo*: from the beginning of the twentieth century it has been closely and directly connected to consumer and popular culture targeted at young women. Notably these popular cultural products, ranging from girls' magazines to fashion products and stationery, were mostly created by men – with one important exception – namely Yoshiya's *Hana monogatari*, which became an extremely popular and influential girls' cultural icon. Closely connected with the *shōjo* as the consumer is the so-called "cute culture" which flourished in the postwar period and has continued right through to the present. Ribbons, frills, flowers, hearts, and cuddly animals appear from cover to cover in girls' magazines, some of which are named *Himawari* (Sunflower, 1947–52), *Ribon* (Ribbon, 1955–), *Māgaretto* (Margaret, 1963–), *Hana to yume* (Flowers and dreams, 1974–). Furthermore they also appear on various kinds of stationery, on handkerchiefs, bags, aprons, pajamas, and slippers, and so on.

One of the central figures in *shōjo* studies, Honda Masuko, identifies several important factors in *shōjo*, which she explains with reference to the keyword *hirahira* (1982: 135–170). This onomatopoeic term usually indicates flitting, fluttering movement; hence it symbolizes the fluttering of ribbons and frills, which may charm the observer but may also be taken, literally, lightly, that is not seriously. Honda further points out the ephemeral nature of this *hirahira* movement, the momentariness that can further be interpreted as indicating the capriciousness of *shōjo*-hood as well as implying its transient and transitional nature. *Hirahira* is an apt adverb to describe butterflies dancing or flower petals falling.

To what extent are these characteristics of *shōjo* applicable to the girl protagonists of *Indian Summer*? Momoko is 19 years old at the beginning of the novel and turns 20 halfway through. Hanako is the same age. In a sense the title of the novel may be interpreted as a mild, pleasant day before the onset of winter (that is, adulthood). Both women may be older than some *shōjo shōsetsu* protagonists, but they are definitely *shōjo*, free and arrogant, unlike meek and dutiful *musume* or pure and innocent *otome*. They consume urban culture, including some of the "cute" (and at times quite expensive) cultural products such as pajamas with Felix the Cat's prints (Kanai 1999: 67). Nevertheless, both Momoko and Hanako do revolt against the stereotypical image of cute and mindless material girls. In this revolt both transgender and intertextuality play crucial roles.

Transgender in *shōjo* culture

It is well known that the theme of transgender was already evident from the outset of the two most innovative and influential genres targeted at *shōjo*: Takarazuka and *shōjo manga*. Tezuka Osamu's *Ribon no kishi* (The ribbon knight, serialization began in 1953, translated as *Princess Knight*) is widely known as the first *shōjo manga* ever to appear. Its androgynous heroine, Princess Sapphire, is dressed and fights like a knight. Tezuka is reported to have said that he "tried to transfer the world of Takarazuka into girls' comics," which, in Fujimoto's view (1998: 132), signifies two important things: first, that from its outset *shōjo manga* was clearly

marked by transgender elements and, second, that that these transgender elements are based on an imaginary world completely removed from ordinary life. Let us note here that this imaginary world corresponds to what we have already stated about *shōjo shōsetsu*. Although each was created by an adult man, these two genres and their transgendering aspects have appealed to generations of young women.

Needless to say, transgender, transsexuality, androgyny, etc. are all found in much earlier graphic, oral, and written texts and performing arts in Japan and elsewhere. But no other period, audience, or genre seems to be so preoccupied with such themes as the *shōjo manga* of the late 1970s onwards – produced, notably, by women artists. The preoccupation of the *shōjo* with these themes has been associated partly with the physical, sexual, and psychological developmental changes experienced by girls in adolescence. Kanai, for example, comments thus:

> Such yearning on the part of the *shōjo* for a neutral sex, however, is very much of a transitional nature. Shibusawa Tatsuhiko once said about Alice [in Wonderland] that she is a girl in a sexual safety zone, the interspace between sexual unconsciousness and consciousness. Why do girls want to be androgynous? Why do they admire Jeanne d'Arc? Alice's state of consciousness gives us an insight about these things. In their transition from sexual unconsciousness to consciousness, girls are torn into two different sexes, masculine and feminine. What used to be one and undivided, or something that could be either earlier in their childhood is starting to be torn asunder within themselves, in the form of a notion of sex that goes against themselves.
>
> (1981: 258)

Kanai's comments do not simply describe the transitional and ambivalent nature of *shōjo*'s sexuality but also suggest the fear and antagonism on the part of the *shōjo* who finds herself forced to become a female sexual being. In fact, as many critics have pointed out, the *shōjo*'s longing for androgyny is closely related to her questioning of, or rebellion against, conventional gender roles. The popular theme of male homosexuality in *shōjo manga* can be interpreted as "a safety device for the *shōjo* to handle such a dangerous substance as sexuality safely, away from her own body," and "as wings that would allow her to fly" (Ueno 1998: 131). Hatred for women expressed by some characters (typically a *bishōnen*) may well imply, as Fujimoto (1998: 140–141) points out, refusal on the part of the *shōjo* to comply with the expected gender role for women.

Many of these transgender themes are used in *Indian Summer*, though in many cases in a teasing, tongue-in-cheek way. The clearest example is Momoko's father and his partner. The father, divorced several years before, lives with a *furawā āchisuto* (flower artist), that is, someone who designs and makes bouquets and floral decorations. At the beginning of the novel Momoko is unaware of this new partner's existence. When she hears the voice of this person on the telephone for the first time, Momoko finds it very strange – "a curiously high-pitched, husky, and artificial kind of voice sounding neither like a man nor like a woman" (Kanai

1999: 38). Halfway through the novel the *shōjo* narrator realizes that the flower artist is in fact a man and that the divorce of her parents must have been caused by her father's sexuality – a shock for Momoko, though neither a devastating nor a lasting one.

In this rather *shōjo manga*-like situation we see multiple play. First of all, the homosexual partner is far from the *bishōnen* of typical *shōjo manga* stories; he is middle-aged, and his face looks like an earthenware pot. He speaks like a retired *geisha* (he calls Momoko "*ojō*," which is a very quaint way to address a young woman in contemporary Japan). We may also note the implications of his profession, which is not traditional *ikebana* flower arrangement but something more modern and we might say, more feminine than *ikebana*. Modern "flower artists" use not just flowers but ribbons, frills, tulle, and other objects that would fit the *hirahira* category. Momoko's father also seems to be having an affair with a younger man, which makes Momoko feel sympathy for the flower artist. Here homosexuality is not the romantic and aesthetic trope found in typical *shōjo manga*; rather it is given a comic, almost farcical twist.

It is not coincidental that the two *shōjo* in the novel are named Momoko (literally, peach child) and Hanako (flower child).[6] Despite her literally "flowery" name, Hanako, in particular, represents an alternative to the stereotypical *shōjo*, an alternative that involves transgender. She is short in height, and she favors an extremely short haircut, which makes her look like a schoolboy.[7] Her refusal to conform is obvious in her language, too – she usually refers to herself by the plain (and non-cute) masculine first person pronoun *ore*.[8] All these factors combined, some strangers take her for a boy. For instance, she and Momoko meet a group of young men at a cinema and start a heated discussion on film. After more than an hour these boys still believe that she is Momoko's younger brother, who is well informed for "his" age.

We are told that the name Hanako itself is an alternative to the one given by her father – Arisa, after the heroine Alissa of Gide's *La Porte Étroite*. This obviously concerns intertextuality, but the point to note here is that Hanako's rejection of her original given name represents the rebellion of a *shōjo* against her father's expectation that his daughter (*musume*) be as pure, innocent, and self-sacrificing as Gide's Alissa.

Gender reversal is also hinted at when Hanako brings a bunch of flowers – forget-me-nots and daisies – in her first visit to Momoko's aunt, whose writing she deeply admires. This is an obvious parody of Yoshiya's *Hana monogatari*, which consists of 52 stories, each of which, only several pages long, is given a specific flower title such as "Lily of the Valley," "Rose," "Gardenia," "Cosmos," etc. that would suit its girl protagonist. Furthermore, in many of the *Hana monogatari* stories a young woman yearns for another young woman. Hanako's admiration for her aunt occasions the following remarks from Momoko:

> I was impressed but at the same time thought it was a bit too much when she started to recite from memory a passage from Auntie's novel. To Auntie, the solitary novelist, this must be a very flattering, endearing thing. How lucky

> that she is my aunt rather than my uncle! For it would be a bit of a problem if a 38-year-old bachelor uncle were to seduce a girl in my class.
>
> (Kanai 1999: 89)

However, this does not develop into a lesbian love story; sexuality, hetero or homo, is not treated as centrally important in this novel. This in itself is a critique of the last element (i.e. the ultimate promulgation of heterosexual love) Tanaka identified in translated *shōjo shōsetsu*.

Intertextuality in *shōjo shōsetsu*

Unlike issues concerning gender, the significance of intertextuality in texts targeted at the girl reader and/or texts dealing with *shōjo* themes and protagonists, has attracted hardly any scholarly attention.[9] This is an area, however, that needs our special consideration, for the absorption and transformation of other texts are in fact central to *shōjo*-hood. The term intertextuality is used here in a broadly Kristevan sense, namely that "tout texte se construit comme mosaïque de citations, tout texte est absorption et transformation d'un autre texte" (Kristeva 1969: 85). The mosaic involves neither the simple imitation nor the repetition of preceding texts but absorption and transformation. We might also consider Genette's notion of transtextuality, which refers to "all that which puts one text in relation, whether manifest or secret, with other texts," and is divided into five types: intertextuality (effective co-presence of two texts), paratextuality (relation between the text proper and its title, preface, postface, epigraph, dedication, illustrations, etc.), metatextuality (critical relationship between one text and another), architextuality (generic taxonomies suggested or refused by the titles), and hypertextuality (relation between a hypertext and an anterior text, that is, hypotext) (summary of Genette 1982, based on Stam *et al.* 1992: 206–210).

As we have seen, Kanai, in her Afterword (that is, paratext), declares that she once was a reader of *shōjo shōsetsu* and that her text is her expression both of her gratitude towards, as well as the grudge she bears against the genre.[10] She certainly explores all types of transtextuality in her writing.[11] Before going into these examples, however, let us briefly discuss the long tradition of girls' intertexuality.

From the age of *The Tale of Genji* (eleventh century), the figure of a girl preoccupied with tales, stories, romance and fantasies – all of which have been regarded as belonging to "women and children" rather than to mature and respectable men – has appeared again and again in fiction, often with interesting meta-fictional debates and implications. The young Tamakazura, for instance, defends the "truthfulness" of tales as well as her own virtue against her seductive step-father, the Shining (if by then somewhat middle-aged) Prince Genji. Austen's young Catherine Morland, on the other hand, eventually learns the absurdity of the Gothic novels she has been absorbed in. It may not be appropriate to declare, as Reynolds (1990: xv) does, that "[g]irls have always read more, and read more widely than boys," for that certainly depends on the period, on the society and on class; many girls were/are not given opportunities to learn reading and writing or to spend time

and money on reading, and today many girls, like many boys, have options – *manga*, games, mobile phones, *anime*, films, etc. – other than books. One can say at least, however, that a girl fantasizing about the story she has read or heard is just as commonly seen in literatures of many different periods and cultures as is a girl dreaming or making up a story. Perhaps the most celebrated example in Japanese literature is the author of the *Sarashina nikki* (The Sarashina Diary, translated by Ivan Morris as *As I Crossed a Bridge of Dreams*, 1971), known to us as the Daughter of Fujiwara no Takasue. Recalling her girlhood in remote provinces, she writes:

> Yet even shut away in the provinces I somehow came to hear that the world contained things known as Tales, and from that moment my greatest desire was to read them for myself. To idle away the time, my sister, my step-mother, and others in the household would tell me stories from the Tales, including episodes about Genji, the Shining Prince; but since they had to depend on their memories, they could not possibly tell me all I wanted to know and their stories only made me more curious than ever.
>
> (Morris 1971: 41)

The girl, not yet 12, is in love with tales, particularly *The Tale of Genji*, and longs to read the real thing – perhaps just as heroes of tales often fall in love with a lady by hearsay and yearn to see her in person. In other words, "[s]he craved," as Keene notes, "not the social life that actually existed at the court but the vicarious pleasure of reading about imaginary people who had once populated it" (1999: 384). Let us note the imaginary nature of the world she longs for. This corresponds well to the third element Hico Tanaka identified in translated *shōjo shōsetsu*. The narrator of the *Sarashina Diary* turns to religion in later life and regrets her earlier obsession with tales, but it is precisely this obsession that has charmed readers, particularly women, for centuries. For reading, hearing, thinking about, or making up a story is an integral and "real" part of a girl's life. It helps her not simply "to idle away the time" but to overcome various difficulties: solitude, poverty, illness, boredom, and social restrictions including gender-based ones. One of the most celebrated girl protagonists, Sara Crewe, consoling her friend Ermengarde, says: "*Everything*'s a story. You are a story – I am a story. Miss Minchin is a story" (Burnett 2002: 89; emphasis in the original). Stories, read and imagined, are equally important to Anne Shirley (of Green Gables) and many other girls.

Absorption, however, is only one part of the intertextual mosaic: we need to acknowledge the other aspect, that is, transformation, as well. Parody, allusion, quotation, adaptation, and travesty play significant roles in *shōjo shōsetsu* as well as in *shōjo manga*, and in the new genre called *yaoi*.[12] The choice of these embedded texts and particularly their transformation strongly indicate the difference from, and often the antagonism towards, the non-*shōjo*, particularly adult male culture. Thus these texts within texts help to construct and define the exclusive *shōjo* world, within which the writer, the protagonist, and the reader share the same texts woven into the primary texts. Furthermore, the ambivalent relationship of a

parody with its original – affectionate and respectful, on the one hand, and teasing and critical, on the other – corresponds well with the ambivalent representations of gender and sexuality.

The intertextuality of *Indian Summer*

One of the important features of the friendship and companionship between Momoko, Hanako, and the Aunt is that they enjoy sharing texts with each other. A book plays an important role in the first meeting of Momoko and Hanako – Hanako abruptly asks Momoko to give her the cover of the book she is reading because the cat in the cover photograph resembles one she used to have.[13] Furthermore, Hanako turns out to be a fan of the Aunt's writing, which clearly marks her difference from other young women at the university, "those innocent girls who never probably read any of Auntie's novels, and have absolutely no idea about what sort of life she has" (Kanai 1999: 8). The conversation with the boys Momoko and Hanako meet at a cinema, too, is prompted by a book, in fact a collection of critical essays on film written by Momoko's aunt. In other words, those who cannot share the same texts are excluded from the companionship of Momoko, Hanako and the Aunt (and vice versa).

Momoko's father, for example, is definitely disqualified. He is tall, well groomed, generous, and absent, which may remind us of some idealized fathers in *shōjo manga* or *shōsetsu*. As the manager of a hotel in Tokyo, he has the knowledge (or rather information), the contacts, and the money to take his daughter to the best restaurants and boutiques and offers her not only food and other presents but also his extensive knowledge about these things. Momoko does not refuse the gifts but she regards her father's efforts to keep up with the latest and the best merely as snobbish affectation. What offends Momoko about her father is that he is a poseur with no intellectual substance. This is what she says about him after one of their shopping excursions in the Ginza:

> Dear me! It makes you wonder. Being weak in the head, he's probably thinking of himself as the father in *Bonjour tristesse*. In other words he's a snob. I remembered the father in Mishima Yukio's popular novel *Megami* [Goddess] I read when I was a child. . . . Seeing his daughter choose a cocktail because it matched the color of her dress made him ecstatic about the fruits of his education. When we were back at home that evening, I had a good laugh with my aunt at the three of them, i.e. my old man, the father of the melodrama, and the author of the melodrama.
>
> (Kanai 1999: 46)

The mosaic of preceding texts makes the criticism sharper and more complex. The father in Sagan's novel is regarded as a fool by his daughter, and Momoko says that her own father is stupid enough to fancy himself as Cécile's father. Such a critical viewpoint is completely lacking in the daughter of Mishima's "melodrama." Unlike the young women in these two preceding texts, Momoko would never

become an accomplice in her father's love affair or an object of his indulgence. Furthermore, while not totally rejecting fashion and consumerism, the daughter still despises her father's snobbery.

Momoko's criticism is directed not only toward her father but perhaps more severely toward her mother, especially her efforts to maintain traditional gender roles and respectability. Given the absence of the father (first because of work and then because of the divorce), the mother does seem to fit in with what Ueno (1996: 15) has called the "transvestite patriarch," that is, the mother acting as a substitute for the absent patriarch. Momoko firmly rejects her mother's view.

If Momoko's mother is repressive and her father shallow and unreliable, the heterosexual father of Hanako is worse; he is notorious for harassing women, exploiting his position as the editor of a magazine – a pretentious and trendy kind of health publication which Hanako and her circle of course despise. Just as Momoko was not yet aware of her father's sexuality, Hanako seems not to know the whole truth about her father, and yet she definitely rejects the patriarchal values he tries to maintain. As mentioned before, Hanako is her self-adopted name, but when there is a telephone call for her, her father insists that there is no one called Hanako in his house. To her the name Arisa is an embarrassment or a bad joke, whereas to him it is a beautiful name he himself chose from a famous literary work. In reporting to her father that she has failed an entrance examination for a national university, she says, "Arisa couldn't pass through the strait gate"[14] (Kanai 1999: 80), but the joke is completely lost on her father. Furthermore, his ignorance of *really* important books, such as Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, irritates Hanako beyond measure.

Equally pathetic, if not as positively objectionable as Hanako's father, is Momoko's admirer. This young man, the heir to a successful family business in Momoko's hometown, has (like Momoko's father) the wherewithal to wine and dine her in the expensive and trendy venues of Roppongi. He has carefully drawn up a future plan for himself and Momoko, which only bores her. She has no illusions about food, marriage, or any other lures this eligible young man has to offer. It is obvious that he cannot *share texts* with her. When they go to see Godard's *Prénom Carmen*, which is of course her choice, he falls asleep halfway through.

So these people cannot share textual pleasure with Momoko and her companions. Those who can, on the other hand, share not only reading of the preceding texts but their transformation which may result in new published texts. In fact, *Indian Summer* structurally depends on this notion of shared and transformed texts. It is not confined to the numerous books and films mentioned in the primary narrative; inserted into the narrative told in Momoko's voice are eight short pieces (two short stories and six essays) written by the Aunt for literary magazines and other publications. The Aunt is (as we have already noticed) very much like Kanai Mieko herself, and yet no reader would mistake this novel for an autobiographical text, for it is clearly about the adventures and experiments of the *shōjo* and ex-*shōjo* in reading and writing. Whether any of the events are based on the author's own experiences is irrelevant here. The Aunt's work is inserted because Momoko and

Hanako are its first readers and critics, often before it is faxed to the publishers. The two girls share with the Aunt not only the written texts but also preceding texts (which include not only literary or written texts but also oral and other types of texts as well) which are absorbed and transformed into them. And we as readers, in turn, can share their amusement and pleasure through reading *Indian Summer* and the texts within its text.

The most obvious example of intertextual amusement is a story entitled "Hana monogatari," an obvious takeoff of Yoshiya Nobuko's *Hana monogatari*, which, in turn, is (at least partly) Yoshiya's "absorption and transformation" of Louisa May Alcott's *A Garland for Girls*. As already mentioned, *Indian Summer* is full of flower motifs, which is both tribute to, and parody of, the *shōjo shōsetsu*. The Aunt's "Hana monogatari" looks like a typical Yoshiya story – the story of a girl admiring a beautiful young woman whom she calls "Onēsama" (the elegant and respectful term for an elder sister/woman). It is not only the obvious title and the theme of faintly homoerotic and yet platonic adolescent love but also the detailed description of clothes (color, texture, style), and use of props (a rose pink cashmere shawl which belongs to the beautiful woman) that all indicate that this story is an *okaeshi* (return/revenge), at once both an affectionate pastiche and a tongue-in-cheek parody of Yoshiya's *Hana monogatari*. That is if the text is read simply as a story published in a magazine – in this case we are told it is not for a literary magazine but for a company's PR magazine – without the primary narrative (or the context) of *Indian Summer*.

There is much more to be enjoyed in the Aunt's "Hana monogatari" than this: the beautiful Onēsama is an *ikebana* artist. The girl finds out that the object of her love and admiration is having an affair with her father. The reader cannot but smile at this radical transformation of the "real-life" gay flower artist into the "fictive" Onēsama. The Onēsama, despite her elegance and beauty, does have some masculine traits – almost like an *otoko-yaku* in the Takarazuka, with her 173 cm height (more than 10 centimeters taller than her lover) and her big strong hands and arms that enable her to clip with ease the thick and hard branches for her flower arrangement. The very first sentence of the "Hana monogatari" describes the *kimono* she is wearing as like a man's, with subdued colors and patterns. So in terms of gender, the Aunt's parody is intriguing indeed: presenting a stark contrast with Yoshiya's "pre-homosexual" *Hana monogatari*, which, as Kume Yoriko points out, ultimately "reinforces the existing gender system and women's evaluation rather than shakes heterosexism" (2003: 110–112).

Conclusion

In *Indian Summer* sexuality, hetero- or homo-, is not the source of *jouissance* or the object of yearning. What brings blissful moments seems to be the *shōjo*'s freedom and pride, to recapitulate Takahara's keywords, and those friendships in the context of which this freedom and pride can be shared. Auntie's essays and stories are entertaining and subversive in and of themselves, but when juxtaposed with the primary narrative, the intra-textual writer (the Aunt), her immediate

readers (Momoko and Hanako), and the extra-textual readers can share the additional pleasure of identifying and musing about various connections between what is written and what has happened or has been talked about in the primary narrative. In addition to the examples seen above, for instance, the unsolicited confession of a girl at Momoko's university about her relationship with her boyfriend and her ordeal of having an abortion is transformed into a comic short story narrated by a young male student.[15]

The powerful and cheerful "*shōjo*" may be a young woman, like Momoko or Hanako, or she may be middle-aged, like the aunt, or she might even be a man, like the flower artist. In one of her tongue-in-cheek essays, Momoko's aunt, who is called throughout the novel "Obasan" (Aunt), insists that there is no real difference between *shōjo* and *obasan* (middle-aged women) except that the latter look older than the former. The immediate subjects of her essay are schoolgirls who walk like middle-aged women and middle-aged women whose favorite reading matter deals with virtually the same kinds of topics as those found in girls' magazines. So, the aunt concludes, "*obasan* are still very much *shōjo*," and "therefore there is no reason for the *obasan* to treat their own girlhood as something special or for the *shōjo* to despise the *obasan*" (Kanai 1999: 147). Obviously Momoko and her company are different from those *shōjo* and *obasan* teased in the essay, and yet while celebrating their freedom and pride, and their power of subversion, the novel also seems to suggest that that jubilation, too, can be, and may even need to be, subverted. Momoko's aunt concludes another essay, a piece on Barthes, with these words. "Am I, then, a reader (and at the same time a writer) with a detestable bourgeois complacency – a reader who reads in books only what I can understand?" (Kanai 1999: 158).

So while the jubilation is based on, or can lead to, subversion (particularly of gender stereotypes) and textual incorporation, there is a certain internal skepticism. And this skepticism is an essential part of the critical power of the *shōjo*.

Notes

1 Founded by Kobayashi Ichizō in 1913, the troupe was originally named Takarazuka Shōkatai but within months changed its name to Takarazuka Shōjo Kageki Yōseikai, commonly known as Takarazuka Shōjo Kagekidan. "Shōjo" was dropped from the name in 1940 (Robertson 1998: 5).

2 The novel was first serialized in a magazine called *Ansanburu* (Ensemble) between October 1985 and April 1987. It was then published in book form in November 1988. The text used here is the paperback edition. The original Japanese title of the novel is written in the Chinese characters for *koharu biyori*, which does mean Indian summer. Kanai specifies the reading of these characters by giving the *katakana* "*indian samā*."

3 See Noguchi (1996) for a concise and yet comprehensive treatment of the problem.

4 This is Tanaka's preferred name order and romanization. Hico is normally written in *hiragana*.

5 Honda (1986: 258–261) gives a brief but insightful etymological analysis of the word *otome*.

6 It may be worth noting that there are famous eponyms: the writer of children's stories, Ishii Momoko, and the translator of stories including *Anne of Green Gables*, Muraoka Hanako. Momoko may also be associated with the Girls' Festival (March 3), which is

also called the festival of peaches. Readers familiar with 1970s' popular culture might further associate the name with Hashimoto Osamu's *Momojiri musume* series or with the actress Momoi Kaori, who was regarded as the representative of the recalcitrant and impudent girl. Michael Ende's *Momo* is another possibility. Hanako, though itself a rather old-fashioned name, may sound fashionable and contemporary when it is associated with the eponymous magazine targeted at young women (slightly older than *shōjo*), which was first published in May 1988, several months before *Indian Summer* was published in book form.

7 In a sense this is an extreme case of the "manifesto of liberation from state sanctioned womanhood" that Robertson (2002: 162) sees in Yoshiya Nobuko's hairstyle.

8 Unlike the younger sounding *boku*, which was used by some girls as an obvious joke version of the first person pronoun, *ore* would normally be regarded as too rough and masculine to be used by young women in that way.

9 Some exceptions exist: Kawasaki (1990) and Foster and Simons (1995), for example, do include some discussions of intertextuality.

10 In her commentary included in the paperback edition of *Indian samā*, Saitō Minako poignantly notes this ambivalent nuance of *okaeshi* (Kanai 1999: 213). Interestingly, Ueno Chizuko also uses the same word in the same kind of ambivalent way in her review of Honda 1986 (included in Ueno 1988: 89–90).

11 In fact, *Indian Summer* includes a wonderful example of metatextuality involving Genette's work, whose penchant for taxonomies is gently teased by Momoko's Aunt. In her essay (within the novel) entitled "Text and Texture" she remarks that although Genette's *Narrative Discourse* is interesting, she cannot see much value in its lists and tables (Kanai 1999: 154).

12 As Mizoguchi explains, the term *yaoi* was coined in the early 1980s by amateur writers as a self-derogatory term. It was "an acronym for the Japanese phrases that mean 'no climax' (*yama nashi*), 'no punch line' (*ochi nashi*), and 'no meaning' (*imi nashi*)." Although it was "originally applied to pornographic parodies using the characters of popular animation shows," it has come to be widely used to refer to male homosexual romance fictions created by and for women" (Mizoguchi 2003: 49–50).

13 Here we have an interesting example of paratextuality: Kanai, a noted cat lover, has published a few books with pictures of a tabby. Readers familiar with other works of Kanai would also see that Kanai's portraits attached to various publications remind us not only of Momoko's aunt but also of Hanako with her short hair.

14 "*Semaki mon*" (strait gate) is a colloquialism denoting the competitiveness of entrance examinations.

15 The piece is entitled "Akachan kyōiku," which is identical to the Japanese title of Howard Hawks' 1938 film *Bringing Up Baby*. Kanai originally published this short story not as a story within a novel but as an independent story in the April 1983 issue of *Gunzō*.

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